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challenge

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Whether You Voted for Bush or Kerry, It Won't Stop

WAR, RACIST CUTBACKS STILL HITTING ALL WORKERS

Newark, NJ

As we go to press, Kerry has conceded the election, one showing a tremendous polarization in the U.S., but it's the wrong one. Too many workers and their allies were suckered into believing voting for Bush or Kerry would change their lives. Actually, Kerry inspired virtually nobody because fundamentally his positions were the same as Bush's.

Instead of being pro-Bush or pro-Democrat, workers, students and soldiers must become pro-communist, anti-imperialist war, anti-racist, anti-budget cuts and anti-fascist. The polarization must be between workers and their allies against the ruling class, which controls both parties. The differences between the two parties are tactical, on how to continue the quagmire in Iraq, which has murdered 100,000 Iraqis and over 1,100 GIs to make sure Exxon-Mobil, Halliburton, & Co. control Iraq's vast oil wealth. They differed on how to administer the war budget which will continue to attack workers and youth at home. PLP's modest actions on election day point to the road workers and students need to follow:

NEWARK, NJ, Nov. 2 — A multi-racial group of workers, soldiers and students rallied and marched in front of the downtown Newark Army recruitment center (next to a polling station) from 4 to 5 p.m. on Election Day. Two young soldiers held a sign that supported the 343rd Company, which had refused to obey orders in Iraq. We also received very supportive waves from two of the soldier-recruiters.

Spirited chants included: "Bush, Kerry, You can't hide, We charge you with genocide!"; "No Matter Who Wins The Election, The War Will Still Go On!"; and, "1-2-3-4, We Won't Fight Your Oil War!" Many passing cars honked in cadence with our chants.

PLP members, friends and supporters leafleted the area. Capitalist elections are important for the ruling class, who use them to deal with conflicts among themselves, and to dupe workers and others into having "faith in the system." In a communist society, run by and for the working class, we'll fight imperialism, not workers of other countries.

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History of GI Rebellions

The Pentagon recently acknowledged that 843 former soldiers from the Individual Ready Reserve (IRR) failed to report for duty as of Oct. 17. Approximately 37% of a total of 2,288 soldiers have refused to notify the military of their whereabouts. The army is "still working to establish contact." While rarely called back to active duty, the members of the IRR are highly skilled, formerly active soldiers who were honorably discharged. If over one third of them refuse to deploy, the army's mission will be seriously undermined.

Recently the San Francisco Chronicle reported on a Stars and Stripes survey which found that half the troops described their unit's morale as low, and one-third believed their mission had little or no value. Many perceived themselves as sitting ducks, sacrificed for questionable reasons.

Red GI Off to Iraq with Red Ideas, See letter page 6

Perhaps the most stunning recent news came from actions taken by the Army's 343rd Quartermaster Company. Virtually one whole platoon of 19 soldiers refused to obey orders to deliver fuel without adequate protective escort, from Tallil to Taji, Iraq. Quickly attempting to put a spin on the combat zone refusal, a court martial offense, Major William Ritter of the 81st Support Command declared, "It was not a mutiny." The major no doubt had his political and public relations orders, but when soldiers, en masse, refuse to carry out a direct order, it *is* mutiny. One soldier, a 20-year-old from Vicksburg Mississippi, via e-mail, "Asked his mom to find out what the penalties were if he refused [to carry out orders] or if he 'struck a superior officer.'"

Truck convoys are increasingly the targets of Iraqi insurgents who seek to undercut already stretched supply lines. Recent captures of foreign nationals have included truck drivers. Supply runs are increasingly dangerous as the insurgency accelerates. The 343rd's refusal to obey orders is further evidence of weakening morale, which, if it spreads, could seriously undermine the U.S. military's ability to sustain its occupation of Iraq.

The history of the U.S. soldiers' resistance and rebellion in Vietnam shows that morale weakness and sporadic resistance can become a full-scale movement against racism and imperialist war itself. Russian history has shown that over time this can lead many to draw revolutionary conclusions and act on them. These developments are not guaranteed, but the potential is there.

History of Revolt — U.S. Military in Vietnam

By 1971, the U.S. military could no longer sustain its military objective in Vietnam because soldiers, marines, sailors and members of the Air Force were refusing to fight, committing sabotage, standing up together against racism, and some were even attempting the assassination of their own officers. David Cortright, himself a Vietnam veteran, extensively documents the GI revolt in Vietnam. In 1992, he explained that new information revealed that the revolts in Vietnam were even more widespread than he first reported. "Low-ranking GI's organized more than 250 anti-war committees and underground newspapers….The resistance within the ranks resulted in a severe breakdown in military effectiveness and combat capability. By 1969, the army had ceased to function as an effective fighting force and it began to disintegrate rapidly. The very survival of the armed forces depended upon withdrawal from Indochina." ("Give Peace A

continued on page 2

100,000 Iraqis Massacred for U.S. Bosses' Control of Oil

EDITORIAL

"The death toll associated with the invasion and occupation of Iraq is probably about 100,000 people, and may be much higher…. More than half the deaths reportedly caused by the occupying forces were women and children. Air strikes from coalition forces accounted for most violent deaths."

So wrote a team of researchers in Britain's leading medical journal, The Lancet (10/29/04), only partly revealing the genocidal horror of U.S. imperialism's latest oil war. The Lancet team didn't look at deaths from diseases related to disrupted water and sewer facilities or from malnutrition in besieged cities. But the report underlines a central truth about U.S. — and all capitalist — rulers: when major sources of profit are at stake, they quickly resort to the mass destruction of human life. And it doesn't matter who occupies the White House. The 14-year U.S. campaign for Iraq's oil riches has been a war crime from its inception, through Republican and Democratic regimes. Atrocity has proved the rule rather than the exception.

We can expect more indiscriminate killing. As this is written, U.S. forces are preparing all-out assaults on Fallujah and Ramadi. In attacks typical of the current phase of the war, U.S. planes shower bombs, rockets and machine-gun fire on a city, "softening" it up for trigger-happy ground troops, who often can't tell insurgents from non-combatants. Many Iraqis, including children, women and other civilians, get blown to bits immediately. Others suffocate in the rubble of their homes. Still more are maimed for life. These horrific tactics serve two purposes for U.S. rulers. One is their military need to control major population centers. The second is sheer terrorism: the rulers are demonstrating to all rivals, present and potential, the ruthlessness of the U.S. war machine.

The U.S.-led bid to wrest control of Iraq's oil from the tyrant Saddam Hussein started with a UN-sponsored embargo in 1990. Food and medicine shortages soon began killing the very young, old and infirm. Gulf War I came in 1991. In addition to combat deaths, including massacres of Iraqis by U.S. forces, the invasion caused typhoid and cholera epidemics that a visiting team from Harvard's School

of Public Health called "apocalyptic" in their devastation. The Pentagon had deliberately targeted water and sewage treatment systems. As a result, "more than 46,900 children died between January and August 1991." (New England Journal of Medicine, 9/24/92)

But that war, while safeguarding Kuwaiti crude for Exxon Mobil and the rest, fell short of capturing Iraq's vast reserves. So the sanctions continued, killing 350,000 Iraqi children under the age of five between 1990 and 2000, according to Columbia University researcher Richard Garfield. Bill Clinton intensified the carnage with bombardments and missile attacks recalling the Nazi World War II air raids on Britain.

But the rulers' killing fields lie not only in Iraq. The U.S. military set a terroristic tone early on in Afghanistan when its airborne gunships wiped out a wedding party. And U.S. brass looked on approvingly while their Northern Alliance henchmen machine-gunned prisoners locked in shipping containers. U.S. world domination and wanton mass murder go hand-in-hand.

U.S. rulers now speculate about taking out Iran or North Korea. James Lindsay, vice-president of the Council on Foreign Relations, the leading U.S. foreign policy think-tank, coldly foresees rivers of blood: "Every military scenario I've seen about a [U.S.-led] war in the Korean Peninsula says an awful lot of people are going to get killed, and it won't be necessarily restricted to North Koreans, it could be South Koreans, it could also be Japanese, as well." (CFR publication, 10/13/04)

As Lenin said, imperialism is the highest stage of capitalism. In it, groups of capitalists — organized into nations — compete via armed force for markets, resources and labor. Imperialists created genocide — systematic extermination — as their most effective weapon. With the anti-U.S. insurgency in Iraq strengthening; with bin Laden re-emerging; with Iran threatening to go nuclear, Saudi royals on a tightrope and Russian, Chinese and European bosses waiting in the wings, the capitalists' fight over control of the Mideast's oil is far from settled. Iran and China are near a "huge oil, gas deal. . . .The deal shows global energy needs are complicating U.S. security interests." (Wall Street Journal, 11/1)

The working class in Iraq, the Middle East and worldwide will continue to pay in blood until workers and youth realize that capitalism and wars for profits go hand in hand. GIs are beginning to oppose the war, disobey orders or refuse to report for extended duty. The way out of this endless butchery is to unite workers and soldiers and turn the imperialist wars into a revolutionary struggle for communism: workers' power.✪

History of GI Rebellions

continued from front page

Chance," p. 116)

In a major essay for Foreign Affairs (April 1972), Morris Janowitz, a military sociologist, wrote, "The military establishment, and especially the ground forces, are experiencing a profound crisis in legitimacy due to the impact of Vietnam, internal racial tension, corruption, extensive drug abuse, loss of command and operational effectiveness, and widespread anti-military sentiment…"

By December, 1972, Col. Robert Heinl, the dean of military historians, argued in the Armed Forces Journal that morale in the Navy was in crisis: "In addition to mounting incidents of shipboard sabotage and other . . . [attacks] and disorders short of mutiny, the Navy has undergone at least five and probably six episodes…which fully qualify within the legal definition of mutiny."

Dave Cortright in "Soldiers in Revolt" (1975) details a highly credible exposé of U.S. soldiers as critical to the U.S. ruling class's failure to win the Vietnam War. Citing another article by Heinl, Cortright notes the Colonel's scathing critique of U.S. military breakdown. "The morale, discipline, and battle-worthiness of the U.S. armed forces are, with a few salient exceptions, lower and worse than at any time in this century and possibly in the history of the United States." (Armed Forces Journal, June 1971)

Cortright traces the "GI movement" that opposed the Vietnam War as it erupted first within the Marines and Army whose troops bore the brunt of fighting and took the greatest casualties. However, as the Pentagon altered its primary reliance on army and marines to a strategy of air assaults and naval bombardment from 1970-73, the resistance exploded within the ranks of air force and naval personnel as well.

This change of U.S. military strategy and the ineffectiveness of troops on the ground was a direct result of the heroic, committed fight of the Vietnamese workers and peasants who — along with the Cambodians and Laotians — suffered some five million deaths in defeating the almighty U.S. imperialist war machine. Unfortunately their heroism has been betrayed by the "market-socialism" rulers now running the country, welcoming Nike, Ford, Sony and other capitalists to super-exploit Vietnamese workers.

Clearly, the anti-war movement at home influenced military personnel tremendously. However, Cortright refutes the widely assumed belief that college-educated, more privileged draftees spearheaded the resistance. In fact, the least privileged soldiers — especially black and Latin working-class soldiers, and also white-working class soldiers (many enlistees) — led the most heroic mutinies of the armed forces by the late 1960's and early 1970's until the war's end. According to Cortright, "the Army's own survey shows that more than half of all soldiers during 1970-1971 became involved in some form of resistance activity—a remarkable and unprecedented level of disaffection."

(This is the first article in a series on the history of revolts in the U.S. and Russian armies. Next: Critical mutinies during the Vietnam era.)✪

WHAT WE FIGHT FOR

✪PLP fights to smash capitalism—wage slavery. While the bosses and their mouthpieces claim "communism is dead," capitalism is the real failure for billions all over the world. The Soviet Union and China returned to capitalism because socialism maintained too many aspects of the profit system, like wages and divisions of labor.

✪Capitalism inevitably leads to wars. PLP organizes workers, students and soldiers to turn these wars into a revolution for communism. This fight for the dictatorship of the proletariat requires a mass Red Army led by the communist PLP.

✪Communism means working collectively to build a society where sharing is based on need. We will abolish work for wages, money and profit. Everyone will share society's benefits and burdens.

✪Communism means abolishing racism and the concept of race.

✪Communism means abolishing the special oppression of women workers.

✪Communism means abolishing nations and nationalism. One international working class, one world, one Party.

✪Communism means the Party leads every aspect of society. For this to work, millions of workers — eventually everyone — must become communist organizers.

JOIN US!

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Union Election Opens Debate on Power

Nearly 40% of the workers in a basic industrial local voted for a PLP member for delegate to the union governing body. He received more votes than any other "opposition" candidate, and would have won if not for a fixed election procedure. This positive showing intensified the struggle on the shop floor, in the union and in our Party. How we gain power has become the subject of debate.

Some opposition candidates focused on illegal and undemocratic aspects of the election process. The current procedure began in 1948 to stymie the efforts of communists and other left-wingers during the reactionary McCarthy period. This industry is crucial to the bosses' imperialist ambitions and the ruling class wanted to make sure the union leadership was firmly in its pocket.

Since then, these misleaders, with generous financial help from the company, have fixed the electoral system, enabling them to run the union for many years. For instance, there are hundreds of union appointees — many actually paid by the company according to the contract — whose jobs depend on their support of the incumbents. And that's just the tip of the iceberg!

Already charges have been filed against some union full-timers who unlawfully campaigned for the leadership while on the clock. Other locals introduced resolutions to eliminate "block voting." Under this scheme, members must vote for a pre-determined number of candidates, even if only a few opposition candidates are running — forcing supporters of the opposition to vote for incumbents as well. According to the misleaders' own calculations, our comrade would have won the election if union members were allowed to vote only for those candidates they wanted.

Political Base-building Will Lead To Real Power

Whether or not these appeals amount to anything, we can't forget what got us here in the first place. Unlike the other opposition candidates and the union machine, our campaign focused on the imperialist war in Iraq and racism. We based our campaign on confidence that workers would understand the links between these "big" issues and conditions on the shop floor.

"What are we here for, if not to talk about the big issues, war and racism?" argued an African-American woman worker at one of the shop meetings preparing for the election.

Not only did they understand, but they acted on it. Dozens helped distribute nearly 7,000 campaign flyers, which exposed the bosses' plans and the union misleaders' list of promises and "happy talk." Workers linked the attacks on our jobs to the Iraq war and racism.

Another black worker gathered his friends in his area for an extended discussion on how the Iraq war was hurting us all. He angrily protested the death and destruction of Iraqi civilians. We reminded him that a decade earlier he had supported Reagan's invasion of Grenada.

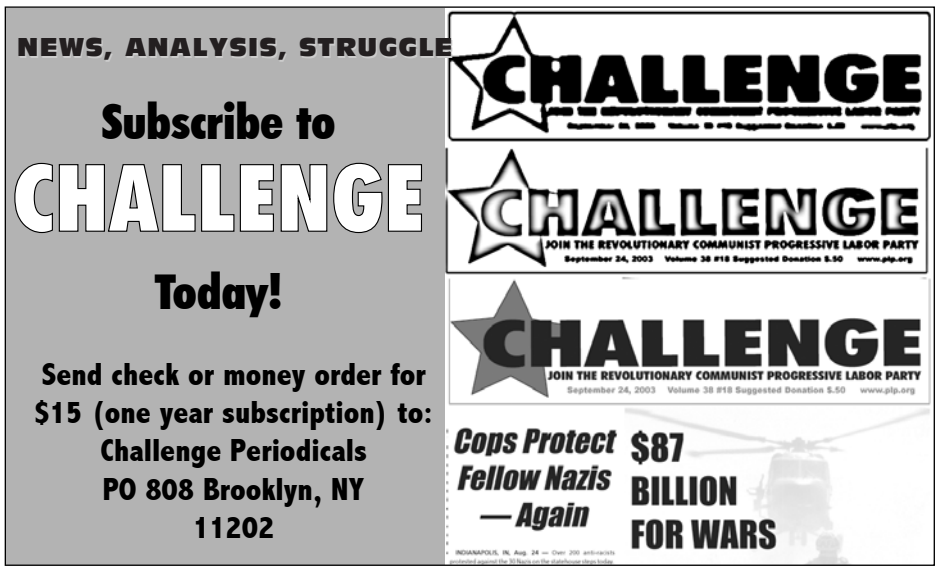
"You see where supporting imperialism anywhere gets you," said our comrade who has known him for a long time. He agreed. Facts are stubborn things and imperialism never changes its spots. If we can't win the argument now, we will eventually!

Democracy vs. Workers' Power

Focusing on "democracy in the union" would sell these workers short. More importantly, it would spread the illusion that democracy and elections can ever lead to power for the working class. Democracy is a tactic used by the ruling class and their labor lieutenants to legitimize the bosses' dictatorship. For instance, they invoked the sham of democracy to justify their imperialist oil grab when all their other pretexts were exposed.

Our goal is to prepare our class to take power with communist revolution to establish the dictatorship of the working class. Tactically, we must focus on deepening the political beachhead we made during the election campaign. A campaign to support the reservists who refused orders in Iraq fits the bill. How much longer will we allow the bosses to order our destruction — either in the factory or on the battlefield?!

The bosses democratic shams are no match for a working class armed with communist political understanding. No matter what happens with this election or any other, building a base for communist revolution remains the measure of our success.✪



Boss Admits, 'That's our system' —

Judge Wipes Out Miners' Jobs, Health Care

In the latest example of capitalism screwing workers, the real war by terrorists has come home to about 3,800 miners and their dependents in West Virginia, Kentucky, Illinois and Indiana who saw their company-financed health insurance "vanish[ed] with a swipe of Judge William Howard's pen." (New York Times, 10/24) The bankruptcy judge granted the request of Horizon Natural Resources to terminate its union contract and just like that, the miners' "guaranteed health insurance" was gone.

The terrorist bosses and their judge dealt a death blow to miners in their forties and fifties who "suffer health problems related to lifetimes of labor underground." At the same time, their sons and daughters and thousands of Iraqis are dieing at the hands of the same ruling class attacking the miners here. Carl Leake, retired after 31 years of making profit for the Horizon-owned Cannolton mine, with a "rock-solid promise of health insurance for life" (NYT), is now facing a $200,000 bill from his wife's breast cancer treatment.

The judge and Horizon voided the union contract and its health benefits to sweeten the deal for financier William T. Ross to buy Horizon. Ross is the same banker that has bought up "bankrupt" steel mills like Bethlehem and LTV. Ross's crocodile tears are a perfect indictment of capitalism: "I very much sympathize with the [miners]…It's awful that these people are displaced. Unfortunately that's our system…" (NYT) Exactly!

Now thousands of miners are bracing for new bankruptcy filings that will void even more union contracts, lay off miners and cancel their health insurance. All the useless United Mine Workers (UMW) leadership can do is hold Kerry rallies, since they have long abandoned the militant tradition of hundreds of thousands of coal miners who fought for and won these benefits. And just as the Clinton administration didn't lift a finger to save the steelworkers in the 1990s, neither Kerry nor Bush will come to the aid of these miners and their families.

These miners, steelworkers and all workers must return to their militant tradition of mass fight-back, but this time turning them into schools for communism. Indeed, the fight for communism — a society without profiteers like Ross and his bosses and politicians — is a life and death struggle for the working class.✪

NYC Workers Back GI's Who Refused Suicide Orders

NEW YORK CITY, Oct. 20 — AFSCME's Local 371 Delegate Assembly voted overwhelmingly to support the following resolution: "Resolved, that a letter of support be sent to the 18 Army Reservists of the 343rd Quartermaster Company who refused to carry out what they deemed to be a suicide mission."

U.S. armed forces are being asked to fight and possibly die for the aims of U.S. imperialism. The refusal of the 343rd shows that there are many who don't want to do that. Hopefully many more refusals and other types of rebellions will follow, and be more political — opposing the war as imperialist. Meanwhile, widespread support can nullify punishment of these brave reservists.

The resolution originated the previous day when retired members discussed the incident at their monthly meeting. One member reported that a leaflet passed out by PLP members supporting the rebelling soldiers at the Oct. 17 Million Worker March received widespread approval. The retirees agreed that such rebellions would hasten the departure of U.S. occupiers from Iraq. They debated and then voted to authorize the long-time union activist to introduce such a resolution at the Local's Delegate Assembly.

Tonight, before the meeting started, many delegates (who have long read CHALLENGE) were advised of the resolution and asked to support it. After the retiree explained the motion on the floor, it was moved and seconded by many voting delegates. (A retiree cannot make, or vote on, a resolution.) It passed with only one dissenting vote.✪

Youth Hear Voting Can't Change Society

PLP banner in Spanish read: From Los Angeles to Baghdad: Smash Racist/Imperialist Terror with Communist Revolution

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA, Nov. 1 — Last week our PLP college club organized a successful fund-raising dinner, initiating a lively political discussion on the presidential elections, the war, and its effects on workers and students. The first speaker said we shouldn't be fooled by the recent "get-out-the-vote" campaigns enlisting a host of celebrities to encourage people, especially young workers and students, to vote. She explained that the ruling class uses these campaigns to diffuse people's anger towards a war that intensifies racist unemployment and cutbacks in education and healthcare.

"They tell you that people struggled and died for the right to vote," she continued, "but that was because they thought it was the only way to change society." She then explained that no matter who's elected, their role is to carry out the ruling class's agenda of war and fascism.

The next two speakers focused on the war in Iraq, the U.S. imperialist plan, the possibility of a draft and the GI's who refused orders. Many students expressed concern about being drafted. However, they were encouraged when one speaker related a conversation he'd had with some students. He had been talking about how the only way to end imperialist war was to organize a communist revolution against capitalism. When one student said, "But they have the military and the guns," another countered, "I've never seen a boss walking around with a gun." Then the first student realized, "Oh, wait, we have the guns. We are the soldiers who they train with guns."

At the dinner, one student — reacting to this story — said she felt good being around people who were organizing to fight these attacks on young workers. Another person emphasized that the 19 GI's who refused their dangerous orders were a good example and a sign of things to come.

The last speaker pointed to the importance of fund-raising for PLP and CHALLENGE. She explained that PLP is the party of the working class and doesn't receive funds from corporations or ruling-class foundations. The affair raised over $200, half of the college club's goal. Several students signed up for study groups and subscribed to CHALLENGE.

In other recent events here, a section of a teacher's union passed a resolution supporting the GI's who refused orders in Iraq. A teach-in on the draft at a local college was very well-attended with good discussions about imperialism and how to fight it, and the need to reach out to people in the military. At another college forum on the war, there was enthusiastic support for sending letters to the GI's who refused their orders.

A lively, well-attended house forum discussed the imperialist war, the election and the draft — both the economic and racist draft as well as general conscription. Three students presented information about the war, the economy, racism and the need for communist revolution. Many of the youth stayed late into the night, making plans to bring anti-imperialist and communist politics into groups on their campuses.

When one said the generals in Iraq wanted to fight the war well and that's why the reservists got publicity, another pointed out that the imperialists and the soldiers have opposing interests. The imperialists want to expand the war for oil profits and win the loyalty of the soldiers, while the soldiers and their families want to end the war sooner and return safely. These activities show there's a lot of potential to win youth to become active members of a fighting PLP.✪

PL'ers Bring Reds Ideas to Profs' Strike Actions

CHICAGO, IL — On October 19, 750 full-time professors at the City Colleges of Chicago (CCC) struck for the first time in 26 years, protesting increased workloads and class-size, and cuts in salary and health benefits. The walkout by Local 1600 of the Illinois Federation of Teachers directly affects the 60,000 working-class students they teach, and indirectly the 90,000 others taught by part-timers (two-thirds of the faculty). PLP is fighting to turn this contract struggle into a fight against racist attacks on public education and the 150,000 mostly black, Latin, women and immigrant young worker-students.

The Party has been active on a few campuses for three years and developed a small base. PLP members joined the picket lines to distribute CHALLENGE, a leaflet about the elections, and to support to the striking teachers. On the first day, we helped organize the entire first-year Physician Assistants class at Malcolm X College to join the picket line instead of taking an exam. The next day we sold about 30 CHALLENGES and distributed fliers at the Malcolm X and Harold Washington campuses, getting into many discussions about communism and the presidential elections. We met many old friends and made six new contacts.

We spent most of the afternoon with four students, discussing the strike and talking politics. We all went to a Strike Solidarity Committee (SSC) meeting, including 17 other students from all seven city colleges. PLP'ers presented a communist analysis of the strike, explaining how racist cuts in education and health care are financing the imperialist war in Iraq and fascist Homeland Security. Plans were made for two demonstrations and we persuaded the group to think about building unity with other workers, such as the CTA transit workers who just received 1,000 layoff notices.

On the third day, the Student Government Association (SGA) organized a pro-administration student rally against the strike. They claimed "neutrality," yet made anti-strike signs and had Chancellor Wayne Watson and his entourage present. Watson makes $219,000/year and has free family healthcare for life.

The SSC organized students and teachers to join this rally and confront Watson and the SGA. About six SGA members, the Chancellor and about 75 other students and teachers were in the park when about 30 students and teachers from Malcolm X College marched to the rally chanting, "Cut-Backs Mean We Got To Fight Back!" We were organized and militant, and everyone joined our chant. When Watson was booed in front of the TV cameras, he scurried off like a rat.

We held our own rally at which a Stroger-Cook County Hospital worker spoke in support of the strike, telling students and teachers they may be needed to support County healthcare workers who are in contract negotiations. The students shouted their support. We distributed more CHALLENGES, leaflets, and made more contacts. After the rally about 12 students came with us to Daley College to spread the word.

Another rally was organized for City Hall. While the Local 1600 leadership said the main goal was to pressure Mayor Daley into mediating their contract, nearly 450 teachers and students chanted, "The Workers, United, Will Never Be Defeated," and nearly 60 students made their way to a sit-in outside Daley's office. The building shook with militant chants. We discussed the possibility of getting arrested and the role of the police as servants of the ruling class.

The union tried to convince us to leave while students on the outside organized more teachers and students to support the sit-in. The union leadership sent "messengers" telling us that we had won, and that the union and administration were back negotiating. The sit-in ended after a very sharp division between those who wanted to continue and others who insisted on leaving. But when we returned to our campuses we found that they lied to us — there were no new negotiations.

There has been a lot of struggle about how to circulate CHALLENGE in a mass way, how much time to spend on strengthening the SSC, and that building the Party is primary, building personal ties and using the paper.

More students are making the connections with the increasing war budget, homeland security and the militarization of the Chicago Public Schools. More students are taking responsibility for the rapidly growing Strike Committee, while we focus on building the Party. There are many contradictions working in mass organizations, but with a strong collective, we have the potential to build a CCC Party club out of this struggle.✪

SEIU's Stern Serves Soro$

The New Yorker magazine reported (10/18) that, "On August 6…a clandestine summit meeting took place at the Aspen Institute in Colorado….The participants, all Democrats, were sworn to secrecy….Five billionaires joined half a dozen liberal leaders….The billionaires [including George Soros] …shared a common goal: to use their fortunes to engineer the defeat of…George W. Bush in the 2004 election."

Joining these billionaires was none other than "Andrew Stern, president of the Service Employees International Union….He conceded that consorting with billionaires had become a strange but increasingly common part of his job. 'I…used to think I was doing well when I met millionaires….I'm glad we've got the billionaires with us.'"

So here's the so-called "progressive" wing of the AFL-CIO glad to be on the same side as capitalist exploiters who make billions in profit off the backs of some of the very same workers who make up the SEIU. They all agree the Democrats are better servants of the bosses. Wonder why we call the likes of the Andrew Sterns and his ilk — to paraphrase Karl Marx — "lieutenants of the capitalist class"?✪

Election Day Protests

continued from front page

This excellent action encouraged many working-class people making deliveries and exiting the nearby office buildings; impressed the soldiers and potential recruits with our militancy and multi-racial unity; and inspired those who attended to keep the struggle going.

NEW YORK CITY, Nov. 2 — PLP collectives held two vigorous rallies opposing the bosses' election day orgy of patriotism, in Brooklyn and the Bronx, selling nearly 900 CHALLENGES and distributing over a thousand leaflets. Brooklyn's banners read, "Elections Can't Fix Capitalism" and "Bush, Kerry = More War." They drew lots of attention and debates. Although many workers still have a lot of illusions about voting, the failures of capitalism are evident. We didn't get a single hostile response from the mainly black and Latin workers passing our rallies. We made three contacts on the street and sold ten CHALLENGE subscriptions in one school in the last two days.

The Bronx demonstration at a military recruiting station denounced the presidential election as a lose-lose situation for the working class and its allies. We urged workers and students to reject both candidates as puppets of the ruling class, and to join with PLP to build a communist future.

We linked the imperialist oil wars to the cutbacks in education, healthcare and jobs. One person told us the military was taking our children to commit genocide in the Middle East. Others said they voted for Kerry because they hated Bush, not because Kerry could solve our problems. We must continue to organize struggle against the ruling class as we fight the "lesser evil" position. We will follow up the several contacts made and maintain a consistent presence and CHALLENGE sale in this community.✪

China's Rebelling Workers Need Red Leadership to Dump Exploiters

[Ed. Note: All of the facts in the following article were taken from the Toronto Globe & Mail, Oct. 20.]

Huang Benlin is one of some 200 million Chinese peasants who have moved from their impoverished villages to the cities in the biggest migration in human history. They are the muscle of China's "economic miracle." They build the skyscrapers and expressways, make the cheap export goods, drive the trucks and lug the steel and cement that has created the boom for China's bosses. They do the toughest and dirtiest jobs. Their labor has transformed China into becoming "the factory to the world."

Huang has suffered 24 years of low wages, exploitation and cruel bosses. His trucking company boss has refused to pay him owed wages (about 550 US dollars) from a year of hard labor in Beijing's construction zones. He lost in court when his boss bribed the judges. So now, "In the cramped dormitory room where [he] spends his nights…violence is on his mind."

"I'll scout out his place," says Huang, and then "come back at night to destroy the trucks,…smash them with heavy tools… [and] ambush the trucks on the road."

Violence between workers and bosses is increasing in the desperate world of China's migrant workers. "We feel like slaves," says Huang. "We have to obey our bosses or we won't get our money….It's like being a prisoner."

Migrant workers suffer an apartheid-like system, denied city residence permits, living a semi-legal or illegal existence, arrested by the cops, easily exploited, without medical insurance, unemployment or housing benefits, or education rights for their children. Living in controlled compounds, sleeping in crude dormitories shared with 15 or 20 other workers, they must beg for permission to go outside.

They earn as little as $1 for a 12-hour day, often working 6 and 7 days a week, sometimes for days and nights without a break, most being paid as little as $60 a month — much of which pays their room and board and fees for permits they need in order to work. Without any organization to protect them, their choice is either unaffordable law suits or violence if a boss refuses to pay them wages due them. More than 70% of migrant workers are owed an astounding $15 billion in unpaid wages, primarily in the construction sector.

According to the Globe & Mail, a "Sociologist notes that the unpaid migrants can be accurately described as slaves, since they toil…for nothing more than a dormitory room and a couple of meals a day. If so, China has at least 10 million slaves."

Now a growing number of unpaid workers are protesting. "Hundreds have blockaded or picketed their employers….At a factory in Guangdong province, about 6,000 workers rioted for 36 hours…when they didn't get [their] pay…"

The growing army of alienated migrants feels a deep anger at their exploitation. They are often desperately lonely, far from their families. Mr. Huang is just returning home for the first time in two years. In his two-story mud-and-cement house, there is no running water, no heat, no telephone and only a few naked bulbs for light.

His wife tends their cotton and wheat crops, raises their children and works at a noodle factory for $2 a day in her spare time. She wants him to drop his legal action and stay home, but Mr. Huang disagrees. "He is determined to keep fighting. He believes that an explosion is coming — and it might engulf more than just his former boss…. 'We common people, the laborers, have done a lot to improve China's economy….a lot more than the officials. If the injustices continue, we common people will be very disappointed. And our tactics could change.'"

ANHUI, CHINA— Retired workers protest lowered living standards

Workers in China do need to get organized, but not with the the so-called "human rights" activists, led by U.S. imperialism — nor with the Falung Gong sect we now see across the U.S. preaching against "rights violations" in China but ignoring the U.S. bosses' wholesale violations of workers' rights worldwide. These groups help prepare the U.S. masses for the coming war the White House knows it must wage against its imperialist rivals in Beijing.

We in PLP believe the development of this rampant capitalism in China, bringing hundreds of millions of peasants into the urban workplace, is a perfect example of what Karl Marx said in The Communist Manifesto: "What the bourgeoisie…produces, above all, are its own gravediggers." This grave will only be dug when a true revolutionary movement arises, a mass communist party of hundreds of millions, that will lead the working class to destroy capitalism and build a society in which workers like Mr. Huang will collectively distribute all the value they produce to the members of their class according to need.

[*In our next issue, we will publish an eyewitness report from two recent visitors to China.*]✪

Sudan's Oil Fuels China-U.S. Imperialist Rivalry

The article in CHALLENGE (10/20) explained how the battle in Darfur in Sudan reflects the rivalry of imperialists at each other's throats over control and production of the country's substantial oil reserves. China, in particular, needs huge amounts of oil imports to sustain its rapidly growing capitalist economy and seeks to profit from this industry as well. Meanwhile, significant conflicts continue among the traditional imperialist rivals — the U.S., France, Germany, Japan and Russia — over oil, especially in the Middle East. This is behind the current hue and cry over human rights violations in Sudan.

Sudan's government estimates it has 3 billion barrels of petroleum reserves, with more than a half billion of currently proven reserves. Because of its expanding oil industry, it has recently been given "observer" status in OPEC (Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries).

A key factor in world oil markets is the importance of marginal additions or reductions to world supplies. Recently such fears of marginal changes because of uncertainty in world events has the price of oil soaring to over $50/barrel from its previous range in the $20's. This increases the importance of Sudan's role. In a parallel sense, U.S. oil companies are aggressively investing in Equatorial Guinea, with approximately the same level of reserves as Sudan. Shell, Chevron-Texaco and other major oil companies already control Nigeria's oil wealth, Africa's largest producer. (Oil worker unions are calling for an indefinite strike for Nov. 16, protesting fuel prices hikes.).

But China is the major investor in, and buyer of, Sudanese oil and other energy industries. As a rising, aggressive imperialist power, China is challenging the U.S. and other imperialists worldwide, especially in resources, and has gained a powerful foothold in Sudan.

Chevron carried out the initial exploration for Sudanese oil in the early 1960s, discovering several oil fields in the South. But Chevron and its competitor Totalfina (French) both withdrew from these fields because of civil war-induced insecurity. After Chevron lost over $1 billion, Arakis, a Canadian firm, took over its rights and formed a consortium in 1996 called the Greater Nile Petroleum Operating Company (GNPOC). The China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) acquired 40% of GNPOC. The balance was held by Petronas of Malaysia, Arakis and a Sudanese firm.

Eventually Arakis' 25% share was bought from another Canadian outfit by India's national oil company, ONGC. Further exploration by a coalition of Japanese, European and Middle Eastern firms began in 2000 in northwest Sudan, reaching into the Darfur region. That oil field extends under Darfur and into Chad, which has already begun developing oil fields in that region.

China's current oil development rights in Sudan also include territory in southern Darfur. It has also invested substantially in the oil refineries at Khartoum and is planning to build a pipeline from western Kordofan (just east of Darfur) to that refinery. A Chinese firm is building seven electricity sub stations and 1,000 miles of transmission lines, while another Chinese company is covering 75% of the costs of a new electricity generation dam on the Nile River. Thus, China is showing a clear interest in building up the infrastructure of Sudan to better meet China's rapidly growing energy needs.

U.S. hostility towards the Sudanese regime has been strong ever since the 1989 coup which brought an Islamic government to power. Remember, Clinton bombed a pharmaceutical company, lying that it was producing chemical weapons. Sudan also sheltered Osama bin Laden for six years. Rigid U.S. sanctions against trade with Sudanese firms has explicitly banned involvement in the oil industry, leaving the field wide open to Chinese, Indian and Malaysian firms. Thus, the U.S. alliance with rebel groups in the south and west of Sudan aims at replacing the el-Bashir government with a pro-U.S. regime so that China and other imperialists can either be expelled or brought under U.S. imperialism's thumb. The pious hypocrisy of U.S. imperialists like Colin Powell about genocide in Darfur is simply part of their strategy to replace the Sudanese government, not because they've suddenly become "humanitarians." Already, the U.S. military is building a beachhead inside Sudan by ferrying several hundred Rwandan troops to Darfur as part of an African "peacekeeping" force.

There's no magic potion to end the "oil curse," the war and devastation suffered by workers living in oil-producing regions. Only destroying all local and imperialist bosses, and creating a society based on workers' needs, not on profits, can end this imperialist curse. What better reason than this to build a mass, international communist PLP now!✪

Sudan and World Oil Supplies: A Comparison

The world contains about 1.3 trillion barrels of proven reserves, 57% in the Persian Gulf region, including 115 billion in Iraq. Sudan's share of reserves of three billion barrels is small but important. It estimates that by next year it will be producing a half million barrels per day, a significant increase from its current daily level of 345,000 barrels. Iraq's peak daily production over the last 25 years has been three million barrels, while current Persian Gulf daily production is about 23 million barrels, 32% of the world's total. Sudan's level of production is approximately similar to Colombia's.✪

LETTERS

New Wind Blowing Against the War

On Oct. 30, I participated in a small but spirited integrated march of black, Latin and white workers and youth against the war in Iraq called by a local Manhattan anti-war group. I helped distribute the "U.S. Out of Iraq" leaflets throughout the activity.

I've given out leaflets and sold CHALLENGE in this neighborhood for many years, but this is the first time in a long time I saw so many people willing to take an anti-war leaflet and also express their hatred of the war and of Bush. From the hundreds of leaflets I passed out in front of the hospital where we started and through the crowded streets we marched, the number of people who expressed support for the war could be counted on one hand.

One older fellow told me, "We got to stay and fight in Iraq," but when I asked him if he was willing to send any young person in his family to fight in Iraq, he replied, "After Bush send his twins there."

Of course, many people hope Kerry beats Bush, but our leaflet explained clearly that Bush and Kerry just represent different tactics carrying out the Iraq war. It called on people to organize instead of voting for any politician.

SIEMPRE ROJO (ALWAYS RED)

GI Off to Iraq with Red Ideas

One of the hardest things to realize as a communist is that I'm actually going to war, for a cause with which I completely disagree. Yet this journey opens the door for more intense Party work and experiences.

Many soldiers are asking themselves why the U.S. is in Iraq at all. The link between Osama bin Laden and Saddam Hussein and the pretext of WMD have long been debunked. In a conversation with some fellow soldiers, amid disagreement over deployment of troops to Iraq, and criticism of U.S. intentions seeking Iraq's oil, one soldier told me that she was glad she wasn't with a couple of patriotic gung-ho's. This occurred on the very first week of my deployment, reassuring me that there must be many more soldiers feel as we do.

Another time walking with some friends around a town, we saw a sign reading, "End the war for oil." They all said, "Right on!"

Nevertheless, even when soldiers are dissatisfied about being away from family, put in danger's way and not totally agreeing with the cause of the war, there's a sense of powerlessness among soldiers. However, history teaches us that, while the imperialists set the theater for war, but the outcome is in the hands of soldiers.

This is a different experience for me because everyone is forced into this war. We will face danger, and primary to all is survival. But the objective as a communist does not change. Seeking to build a base, I must lead more political discussions and bring my ideas to my friends. Although the situation can be intimidating, we must not underestimate the power of soldiers in a strong anti-imperialist collective. As tension rises, political struggle must intensify. Building a strong base is the first step.

My journey is just beginning. There have been lots of heated discussions over assignments by the brass. Dangerous assignments have angered many soldiers. I'll keep you posted on my progress.

RED SOLDIER

Daughter, PLP and CHALLENGE 'get me through the day'

Having finished picking corn in the Mid-west [see CHALLENGE 10/20], I'm going state to state searching for another job. I'm trying to save enough to return home south of the border to my 12-year-old daughter whom I miss so much and who cannot accept not seeing me for so many months.

"If I stay with you we will starve," I told her. "Yes daddy, and when you leave we stay alone, and loneliness also can kill you," she responds.

"Damn capitalism!" I say to myself. I hate it, and must get rid of this demon, this hell. But I must calm down and understand that the devil the bosses and their religious servants have invented is in reality capitalism, crueler than the Satan they use to scare us. There will come a day when all the devils that kill workers will be just ancient history.

The work I do is harsh. One must break the Guiness World Record on daily hours worked since $5.25 an hour for 40 hours a week won't get you too far.

I've traveled throughout the U.S., from warm Florida to the cold Mid-west, working on everything from packing corn to arranging flowers in cold rooms. This is the real hell migrant workers must suffer, long periods away from their loved ones. And while we're super-exploited, unable to earn enough to satisfy basic needs, our bosses get richer and richer.

The contractors who send us from state to state are modern-day slave-traders, doing the dirty work for big agribusiness, hiring undocumented immigrants, retirees and others, and promising us "good working conditions," putting us in rundown trailers, unhealthy labor camps, and sometimes in fourth-rate motels, five to a room.

This year was different: many citizens, immigrants with papers, former professionals and others are now doing this work. The economy is so bad that many are no longer shunning "work for illegal aliens."

Capitalism strangles the working class. That's why we must become the gravediggers of this system. And the bosses are helping dig their own graves by turning into proletarians many who never dreamed they'd be doing manual labor. Besides my daughter, PLP and CHALLENGE are the only things helping me get through this hell. But the day will come when the working class will become the masters of the universe.

RED CORN

Profits vs. Patient Care

As a clerical worker employed at a major East Coast teaching hospital, my primary responsibility is providing administrative and secretarial support to emergency medicine doctors. Recently the department chairman announced the arrival of a new attending physician (Dr. X), who would head an "expedition medicine" unit giving medical support to two "high end" travel agencies, of which he's medical director.

These 2- or 3-week expeditions will transport participants to famous and remote parts of the world in a private Boeing 747 containing 90 first-class seats for passengers with a crew of 15. The aircraft offers a sophisticated kitchen and chef. A team of academic experts will lecture on diverse topics — anthropology, art history, history, archaeology, biology, economy, geology, geography, photography — and provide a framework for the region being visited. Cost per person ranges from $14,000 to $50,000!

Itineraries include developing countries (in Asia, Africa and South America) where medical care is substandard due to economic problems, dilapidated facilities and a shortage of educated medical workers and supplies. This underscores the obscene inequality imperialism creates: the wealthy elite have access to exclusive healthcare anywhere, anytime (even airborne), while one Washington State-based physician led a medical mission in Kenya (2003) that had a patient who walked from Tanzania for three days, carrying her child on her back, just to see a North American doctor. (www.evergreenhealthcare.org/showpage.asp?sec=2668i.artid=4266)

Physicians accompanying these expeditions receive special "perks" — expense-free participation in activities and a significant discount for their spouses. Hospital administrations enabling doctors to take such junkets eventually cut and speed up staff. They sacrifice the smooth running of the hospital and patient care by leaving the emergency room without sufficient personnel and/or pressure other attending physicians to add shifts to an overburdened schedule. Recently the department offered an extra $800 in desperation to fill one particular shift. All this demonstrates the hospital's empty commitment to providing quality health care to patients who truly need it and corrupts the ethics of medical professionals, encouraging them to emphasize their own self-serving interests over social responsibility.

In a true communist society led by PLP, healthcare will exist to improve the quality of life, based on need, not on make profits. Hospitals will serve the working class, not rich bosses. Patients won't be sent home or onto the streets while they're still sick. There'll be no one with power over healthcare workers and trying to bribe them to scrimp on patient care. Fight for communism!

EAST COAST COMRADE

Back Reservists Who Disobeyed Orders

When the news broke about the reservists who refused to carry out a convoy mission in Iraq, I raised the issue in my peace group, which had been talking about reaching out to U.S. soldiers. We quickly drafted a statement of support denouncing the cruelty of this order, saying the platoon should be honored, not punished. The statement emphasized that instead of sending more equipment and troops to Iraq, the U.S. government should bring the troops home and end the unjust war.

Copies of this statement are being sent to the news media, but what really excited the group was the possibility of sending it to military families.

Several good conversations have already resulted. "The empire is near the end when its mercenaries refuse to fight," one person said cheerfully. He's not entirely right — it will take a growing, serious revolutionary organization to defeat U.S. imperialism — but this is the first time that so many people in our group have grasped the importance of taking our anti-war message to workers in the military.

When a shortened version of the statement was circulated at our church, 50 people signed it, adding comments like, "Thank you!" and "More power to you!" One told me, "I wish that all the troops would do the same thing." They, too, were excited about communicating directly with military families. After all, in 1971, 55% of the U.S. military were in active or passive rebellion against the war in Vietnam, leading to the end of that U.S. imperialist intervention.

We said the Democrats were making it a campaign issue, portraying Bush as an ineffective warmaker, implying that Kerry would have sent even more troops into battle with more equipment. Early in 2003, after much discussion, our church overwhelmingly

continued on next page

A Single Step in the Long Journey Toward Revolution

B**ROOKLYN, NY** — When the bosses go to war, the working class pays.

So we organize a fight back at this grossly overcrowded high school here. A group of teachers get together because they're really fed up. The huge number of oversized classes is the final straw. Add to this the local union chapter's inactivity. The infrequent meetings turn into no more than a place to complain. No actions are organized.

But our small group forges ahead. We have several meetings. We reach out to the parents at several PTA meetings. Students get involved. Several petitions are circulated. We call for an informational picket line outside the school and get an excellent response. Over 30 teachers participate, 20 to 30 parents and, of course, students lead the way; 150 participate during the 50 minutes. One student after another reads a prepared speech, linking the budget cuts to the war. Students lead the demonstration with their enthusiasm and militancy.

The next day I'm talking to a friend about the teacher-contract talks and the sellout the union leadership is promoting. He says something like: "I don't know if we can get much more. These are bad times." I think about that for a minute and he's right. These are very hard times for the working class. Budget cuts. Government deficits. Corporate bankruptcies. Cancelled pension plans. All governments are having some sort of fiscal crisis and they can't provide many essential services for the working class. Even the big corporations are crying "broke." Of course, it's only the working class that is suffering. The CEO's are still raking in million dollar paychecks.

OOPS! There's one major exception to U.S. economic problems. The rulers seem to have no problem funding their imperialist war in Iraq.

So how does our struggle against overcrowding and for smaller classes fit into this larger world picture? The U. S. ruling class (big business) is directing all monies toward imperialist war. They want to control the planet's oil supplies, protect profits and rule the world. They don't care about the education of young working-class students. That includes Mayor Bloomberg and Chancellor Klein.

So we'll have to keep up the fight for a long time. We need more small victories to show that students, teachers and parents can stand up to the school bosses when we're united. But to maintain the fight we need to train fighters for the working class. This is just one battle, with many more ahead. Communists are dedicated to carry this fight to its conclusion. Join us.✪

Who's Really Paying for the Guard? A Lesson in Surplus Value

"The pay for a guard to watch our cars in the company parking lot shouldn't come out of our pockets. Let the bosses pay!" said a worker emphatically. "I agree," said another. That's how it started, or in this case continued — one of the many discussions and political debates occurring daily in this pants factory.

This grew out of a worker's car being stolen from the parking lot. Since then, the parking lot gate has stayed locked. If one needs to go there, he must ask for, and return, the key. The boss is also replacing a fence around the lot. All this makes it more difficult to steal cars but doesn't prevent minor damage, like broken windows or stolen stereos.

A worker who wrongly argued that we should pay the guard's salary did so because he and others have newer cars and don't want them damaged. But the other worker disagreed, saying, "Let the boss use the guard watching us so we won't steal the pants watch the lot instead." Another worker added, "It's true, the boss doesn't care about our belongings. The guard watching us also guards the smaller parking lot, where the boss and his confidants park their cars."

"Well," argued the worker who wanted the workers to hire a guard, "the boss is doing a lot to even give us free parking. In the downtown area, the workers must pay for it and it's expensive."

Another worker challenged this: "It's true they allow us a place to park, but only because it serves their interests. In the downtown area, most workers use the bus and don't need parking. Cars are the only guarantee we'll get to work."

"But." said the worker arguing for the workers to pay, "the boss is spending lots of money. Rent here alone is costing him $27,000 a month."

"What, he doesn't have money?" asked the other worker, a little sarcastically. "And the thousands of dollars he puts in his pocket every week made off our sweat? Some other time we'll discuss this question at its root, about surplus value. Now let's see approximately how much we produce in profits for the boss.

"He gets $9 for each pair of finished pants. The most he spends on wages and costs for these pants is about $4, leaving him a minimum of $5 profit per pair. When there's enough work, we make an average of 3,000 pairs a day. That means the boss keeps an average of $15,000 a day, $75,000 a week, not counting Saturdays, which we sometimes work. That's more than enough to pay the rent, the guard, better wages and give us many benefits we don't have."

"Well," said the other worker, "it's a good talk but its time to start work. We'll continue later."

The conversation ended but not the process of politicization of the workers. We've had talks about the presidential elections, the war, capitalism versus communism, etc. These and several work stoppages are creating a political environment where workers are more open to our communist ideas and more willing to express them and their anger in militant actions against the boss, his foreman and his guard. ✪

PLP Leads Flght Against Military Recruiters in H.S.

BROOKLYN, NY, Oct. 16 — A healthy dose of revolutionary communism was brought into a "Peace Fair" organized by the Brooklyn Parents for Peace when PLP students and teachers led a workshop on military recruiters in our schools. The need for revolution was placed front and center by a young comrade who linked budget cuts to imperialist war and the need for a movement opposing military recruitment in our schools.

A petition demanding all charges be dropped against the 18 U.S. soldiers in Iraq who refused orders was signed by about 30 participants. This campaign should be pursued much more vigorously.

An error many people make fighting on this issue is a tendency to write off the working-class youth that wind up joining the military. But the rulers' economic draft will continue forcing some young people into the military. More importantly, our class brothers and sisters who join the military have the potential — and the necessity — to play a revolutionary role. We must understand the opportunity as well as the danger when young people decide to join the military.

We need many more young people at such events. While our high school youth do advance the Party's ideas in speeches and are taken seriously by adults, it's even more critical to bring the students and teachers in our schools to events where we can take the lead. We don't welcome the bosses' wars and we want military recruiters out of the schools. But we also know that opening the eyes of youth in and out of uniform to the need for, and possibility of, communist revolution lays the foundation for a red army of workers and youth to smash imperialist war for good. ✪

LETTERS CONT

approved a statement opposing the impending war as "unjustified and immoral." Now it's almost an article of faith that we vote for Kerry, even though he's promising to wage this unjustified and immoral war "more effectively."

Many people were happy to sign the letter to the reservists because they saw it as a real action against the war, even though many will probably vote for Kerry. They hope electing an alternative to Bush will end the war. But others are thinking that reaching out to soldiers is more solid.

Several friends wouldn't sign the letter because it called for withdrawal of U.S. troops. They said, "I was against the war, and I support what the reservists did, but we made a mess over there and now we must stay and clean it up." We replied that "we" hadn't made the mess — the imperialist U.S. government did! — and that it's only getting worse. These friends are holding the faint hope that Kerry will become president and somehow "fix" things. However, circulating the letter created a great opportunity for political struggle, which will surely continue for a long time.

A WEST COAST COMRADE

Traitor General

For those interested in World War II history, you should know that a Russian Military Tribunal heard the case for "rehabilitation" of Soviet General Andrei A. Vlasov. "Rehabilitation" means: declared to have been the victim of "political repression." Vlasov deserted to the Nazi side in 1942, and led an army of a few hundred thousand (mainly Russian former POWs) to fight with the Nazis against both the Soviets and the Allies. He and 11 of his officers were tried and hanged as traitors in 1947.

Sadly for all anti-communists, the Tribunal decided not to"rehabilitate" Vlasov — this time. But it left the door open by partially rehabilitating him. The charge of "anti-Soviet agitation" — one of the lesser charges against Vlasov — was removed. This will allow a renewed attempt to "rehabilitate" him in the future. (St. PetersburgTimes, 10/6/01)

http://www.sptimesrussia.com/archive/times/719/top/t_5096.htm

SOVIET HISTORY BUFF

RED EYE ON THE NEWS

BELOW ARE EXCERPTS FROM MAINSTREAM NEWSPAPERS THAT CONTAIN IMPORTANT INFORMATION:Abbreviations: NYT=New York Times, GW=Guardian Weekly (UK)

Plan another war for oil

Aided by American helicopters, planning and surveillance, Colombian forces have the stated goal of penetrating the historic heart of Colombia's largest rebel group to "strike a decisive blow to narco-terrorists"

But the Washington-backed offensive has another motive, oil, and military authorities say, one that Colombian and American officials only gingerly discuss: to make potentially oil-rich regions safe for exploration by private companies and the government-run oil company. (NYT, 10/22)

Capitalism hurts health

Angry about not getting a flu shot? Imagine being unable to find supplies of a medicine that limits damage from a spinal cord injury, a medicine that improves the health of a premature baby, or a medicine that fights systemic bacterial infectious.

Each of these drugs, and dozens of others, are in shortage in the United States right now. On any given day, 50 to 80 drugs, many of them life-saving, may be difficult or impossible to find. Some patients die waiting for them....

The larger story behind the flu vaccine shortage is that drug supply disruptions in the United States have become routine.

The immediate causes are myriad....But some economist say that they all stem from one central feature of the nation's public health system: no one is in charge.

Ensuring adequate supplies of goods that yield such benefits is "a classic example of something that should not be left to the market alone." (NYT, 10/31)

Pakistanis see oil motive

Only 16 percent of Pakistanis support the campaign against terrorism. More than 50 percent said it was motivated by the United States' desire to control Middle East oil, dominate the world and take aim at Muslim governments seen as hostile to America. (NYT, 11/1)

Say goodbye to promises

Lyndon Johnson famously declared during the 1964 presidential campaign that he was "not about to send American boys 9,000 or 10,000 miles away from home to do what Asian boys ought to be doing themselves." Woodrow Wilson campaigned for re-election in 1916, the year before the United States entered World War I, on a promise of peace and prosperity. And George W. Bush pledged in 2000 that he would have a "humble" foreign policy without nation-building.

....Does it really matter what the candidates say during the long months of a campaign? (NYT, 10/31)

What's 'left'? Nothing much

After a 33-year struggle, the left has finally gained power here. But if the experience of a neighboring country like Brazil is any guide, Tabare Vazquez and his Broad Front, narrow winners in the election on Sunday are more likely to tinker around the edges of Uruguay's problems than carry out the profound social transformation they have been promising. (NYT, 11/2)

PLP Exposes Police Brutality at Red Sox Celebration

BOSTON, Oct. 30 — Today, over three million fans celebrated the Red Sox Major League baseball victory, its first since 1918. But at least one family was mourning, not celebrating. A week before, after the Red Sox' incredible comeback defeated their archrival N.Y. Yankees for the American League pennant, crowds gathered outside Fenway Park. After a bottle was thrown at a cop on horseback, the police fired pepper spray bullets into the crowd, killing a female college student.

The girl's father was outraged, so the Police Commissioner visited the family to keep them quiet and save face. One Boston newspaper printed a large front-page color photo of the girl lying in a pool of blood. The media portrayed it as an unfortunate tragedy caused by drunk, irresponsible college students. They barely mentioned that the cops fired into the crowd.

A protest against police brutality was called for the Sunday game. When we arrived, about 30 people — some anarchists, students, "Marxists," the Green Party and others — were waiting with a petition to ban the use of pepper spray guns until the cops had "adequate training" to use them. They were out of sight of all the fans and street traffic.

While the protesters began making signs for the murdered student for a vigil outside Fenway Park, PLP members and friends crossed the street and began leafleting in front of the subway station as the fans poured onto the street. We explained how the murdered student had just been standing in the crowd, and how the cops were eager to use the new weapons originally used for crowd control during the Democratic National Convention. We said the militarization of the police was an aspect of rising fascism during wartime. Then we unfurled our banners that read, "No Police State Here," and "Police Serve the Ruling Class, Not the Working Class — Join PLP!"

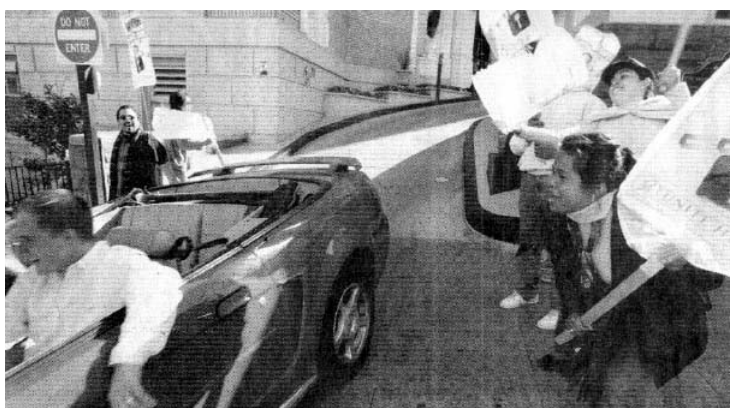
The response from entering fans was far from positive. Many didn't want anything to spoil the moment" for which they had been waiting for 86 years. Some even said the murdered young woman "deserved it." But communists have the duty to spread the truth no matter how unpopular it might be at the moment.

The following day PLP was mentioned in the Boston Herald, the city's conservative newspaper, with a photo of our "No Police State" banner, and a quote from a comrade who said he wouldn't feel "endangered by a Red Sox celebration. I think my life would be endangered by cops with weapons." The same comrade was also called by WRKO and put on the air by two right-wing talk show hosts. The comrade stood his ground, exposing how the cops had shot at another fan 13 times, just for sitting on the outside wall of Fenway Park. He also said the police shoot at people all the time in black and Latin neighborhoods. The murder of the young college student is another aspect of how racism hurts all workers and students.

We distributed a few hundred more leaflets in Cambridge, where we often sell CHALLENGE, and received a much better response. We must continue to tell people the true role of the cops and to organize against the growing police state here.✪

San Francisco Hotel Strike:

No Room for Scabs



SAN FRANCISCO, Nov. 3 — Four thousand hotel workers struck here for two weeks and now are locked out indefinitely. Hotel bosses want to jack up workers' health insurance payments from the current $10/month to $270/month! Bosses' profits come before workers' needs.

The strike is an inspiring fight-back. But the workers will get shafted if the union continues to emphasize reliance on Democratic Party politicians and "winning public opinion." The Mayor even walked the picket line for a few minutes, hypocritically declaring "support" for the workers, "support" which depends on workers' pacifism and obeying the bosses' laws. Once workers try to stop scabs and shut down the hotels, these politicians will disown us pronto.

Under capitalism, laws protect the bosses, not the workers. Their cops and courts defend the bosses. Strike-breaking is legal, shutting the hotels is not. The cops have even ticketed drivers for honking support for the strike.

The union's diversity clause, to force hotel bosses to hire black workers — an anti-racist position unusual in today's union movement — and its goal of a joint contract expiration with other locals around the country both build workers' unity. But this position is rendered meaningless by its reliance on politicians and the bosses' laws, and refusal to organize violent opposition to scabs.

Strikers welcomed PLP'ers who joined the picket lines, raising ideas based on working-class solidarity and militancy. Young PL'ers led chants like, "Down with the Scabs, Power to the Workers!" and "The Workers, United, Will Never Be Defeated!" We confronted scabs twice, yelling the chants in their faces, but this didn't stop them. Workers' anger was starting to boil. The PL'ers said the strike is important for the entire working class, and that capitalism never provides for the needs of the working class.

PLP workers in transit (MUNI) also advanced working-class solidarity, and brought co-workers to picket. Even after they left, some of their solidarity posters were still being carried by strikers and stuck on lampposts: "SAME ENEMY, SAME FIGHT — MUNI AND HOTEL WORKERS UNITE!"

This solidarity was just a tiny taste of the power workers would have if united as one working class. If thousands of city, hospital and construction workers, teachers, janitors, and students flooded the picket lines, it could strike fear in the scabs and shut the hotels. This, plus the leadership of communist ideas, could bring us one step closer to workers seeing they have the power to smash capitalism and its "legal" exploitation.✪

Rulers' Lies Transformed Gung-Ho Marine into Anti-war Activist

The Sandstorm: Stories from the Front by Sean Huze features ten monologues of U.S. marines who have undergone major combat in Iraq. Huze clarified his political views and his motivations for writing the play in recent interviews. Still in the Marines, Huze faces possible court martial; he and his wife have suffered death threats.

Huze was not a conscious activist three years ago, when immediately after 9/11 he enlisted in the Marines to "fight Al Qaeda and defend our country against terrorism." When interviewed, Huze joked that back then he was not the smartest guy politically.

The day after seeing 9/11's devastation, he visited the Marine recruiting office, brushed off all "recruitment options and benefits packages" and signed on for Afghanistan. Without any understanding of terrorism, its root causes or its history, he had been persuaded to fight in the imperialist war machine. And, he concedes, he was more than willing to destroy "all of America's enemies" no matter what the costs to civilians.

Huze was attached to the Marine Division that spearheaded the attack from Kuwait into Iraq. From the graphic depictions, it's clear Huze saw major action.

Each monologue depicts a Marine speaking directly to the audience relating a tale of horror and destruction, usually involving heavy civilian casualties — a prevailing theme — as well as the high number of civilian casualties, and the desperate and confused state of Marines who subsequently suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

PTSD is a psychological illness affecting many veterans after their service and often leaves permanent scars. It often results from soldiers experiencing combat horrors and an inability to handle the fact that their government lied to them about the war and its real causes.

Each monologue depicts a slightly different personal trauma. One private weeps as he reveals that he was to survey dead Iraqi after a firefight; he found a foot and manically attempted to find the leg it belonged to. Another Marine admits he didn't use his gas mask because of claustrophobia; his mask stifled his breathing, especially in 120-degree heat. The audience laughs as he says he wasn't disappointed that no weapons of mass destruction were found.

Another monologue depicts a medic who treated a wounded civilian whose family had been shot and burned in the family car.

One of the last scenes portrays a lifer sergeant, drinking alcohol to dull his frustration. After a sudden shelling and ensuing melee, he loses a picture he's just received of his son's first haircut. The Sergeant breaks down in tears and declares, "It's all f—-ed up."

The power of these monologues stunned the audience. The fictionalized soldiers and Huze himself reveal their fundamental ambiguity — the horrific war experience itself is not enough to bring soldiers to anti-imperialist consciousness. It's just "all f—-ed up."

In his interview, Huze conceded he didn't think much about the enormous civilian casualties until after he came home, but then began suffering nightmares and insomnia. Most significantly, Huze claimed his critical transformation came only after his realization that there were no WMDs, no links between Al Qaeda and Saddam Hussein, and that his government had lied to him. For Huze the combination of horrific civilian casualties and those lies triggered his transformation into anti-war activism.

There is a growing resistance within the military, from refusals to report for duty, to desertion, to refusing dangerous, murderous orders. However, without revolutionary political leadership, soldiers will not draw anti-imperialist or anti-capitalist conclusions. Huze himself conceded he was planning to vote for Kerry because of Kerry's war experience and anti-Vietnam activism. He doesn't yet see that Kerry is the more dangerous imperialist because he aims to expand the war, send in more troops and try to win U.S. youth to believe in the mission of expanding U.S. imperialist domination.

Without PL'ers' strong personal ties and engagement with military personnel and their families, a very limited pacifism will emerge. With PLP's ideas, the current growing anger within the military can grow in consciousness, numbers and impact.✪